



Travellers for Visit Finland's Rent a Finn summer campaign have been chosen

Rent a Finn is a global phenomenon – over 190 countries reached

Visit Finland's Rent a Finn campaign is a global invitation for travellers to come explore Finland, the world's happiest nation. Eight groups of visitors have now been chosen from among more than 6 000 applicants. They will experience life close to nature and learn the art of unwinding with their Finnish hosts, who have also been chosen from a large group of candidates. Rent a Finn is set to create a new phenomenon in travel.*



(May 30, 2019, Hong Kong) – Rent a Finn has gathered enormous interest from around the world. This entirely new approach to travel and promotion meets a growing global demand for authentic experiences. Finland's pure, wonderful nature, serenity and genuine people attract travellers.

"We received more than 6 000 applications from 124 countries, far exceeding all our expectations. Inquiries and media requests have also been flowing in from all corners of the earth. It seems that Finland's brand and living like a local are both trending at the moment, as Finland continues to attract more and more travellers", rejoices **Heli Jimenez**, Senior Director of International Marketing at Visit Finland.

Rent a Finn encourages ordinary Finns to teach travellers how to unwind and connect with nature. The upcoming summer's visitors were chosen based on video applications from around the world. They will all have their very own Finn, who will host the travellers for a few days at

their home or summer residence. The visitors can experience anything from fishing, boating, saunas, dancing or picking berries – whatever they are into.



“Visit Finland seeks to promote diversity in Finnish tourism. We want to create opportunities and experiment with inspirational forms of travel. We believe Rent a Finn will prove that inviting travellers into our homes and everyday lives is worthwhile. What may be ordinary to us, can be very exotic to others”, says **Paavo Virkkunen**, Head of Visit Finland, the Business Finland unit in charge of promoting international travel in Finland.

Rent a Finn has been featured prominently in global news as well as social media posts and discussions. Articles on the phenomenon have reached more than one billion readers, and the number continues to grow steadily.

Interest towards the Rent A Finn initiative has been massive, but at this point the number of official guides and visitors is limited. With the upcoming visits, *Rent a Finn* will continue to pick up speed and take shape autonomously, as the enthusiastic participants lead the way.

With the hastag #rentafinn happiness-searching tourists and nature-loving Finns can find each other through social media.



Visitors coming to Finland this summer are:

- Petri, Mathildedal, guests: **Amélie and Rémi, Paris, France**
- Timo, Punkaharju, guests: **Flavia, Carlo and Giada, Pesaro, Italy**
- Hanna, Ansalahiti, guests: **Yantao and Zishuo, Luoyang, China**
- Esko, Rovaniemi, guests: **Preston, Marie, Savin and Hobson, San Diego USA**
- Laura and Joni, guests: **Angelina (Chinese) and Connor (English), Guangzhou, China**
- Juho , Nuuksio and Porkkala, guests: **Shun and Misato, Tokyo, Japan**
- Katja, Helsinki, guest: **Madeleine Cologne, Germany**
- Linda, guests will be announced and introduced later on the campaign website.

For more information on happiness guides and visitors rentafinn.com and for more information on Finland see visitfinland.com

High-res images can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/2Wt3hqu>

**UN World Happiness Report 2019 <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2019/>*

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Visit Finland works to develop Finland's travel destination brand, market Finland to travellers abroad and help companies in the travel industry go global. We cooperate with travel destination regions, businesses in the travel industry and other export promoters and embassies. Visit Finland is part of Business Finland. www.visitfinland.fi

Business Finland is the Finnish innovation funding, trade, investment, and travel promotion organization, headquartered in Helsinki. Business Finland is fully owned by the Finnish Government. Business Finland employs 600 experts in 40 offices globally and in 20 regional offices around Finland. Business Finland is part of the Team Finland network.

www.businessfinland.com

Happiness guides and quests:

Petri

Petri is a physiotherapist and nature lover who lives with his wife Sini and their dog Ruu in a small village called Mathildedal in Southwest Finland.

They have a strong connection to nature, as their home village is located in the middle of a national park next to the Baltic Sea. Petri enjoys the small, simple things provided by nature, like hiking, biking, skiing and sitting by a campfire, breathing in clean forest air.

Petri's guests arrive from the capital of France, Paris. Amélie, a civil servant working in the city of Love, will arrive to Mathildedal this June along with her older brother Rémi.

Amélie loves nature and its calming effects but working in a big city doesn't give her a chance to visit nature properly more than once every two or three months. Having heard that Finland is a nature lover's dream, she became eager to participate in the Rent a Finn – program. She read about the campaign from a newspaper at 11 pm and got so excited she couldn't sleep but instead had to film her application video right away.

Amélie is a big fan of Finnish Author Arto Paasilinna (1942-2018) and she now has a chance to visit the landscapes described in his books in mid-June. She is mostly looking forward to experience the quiet nature, the people and different activities.

Time of visit: 14.–16.6.2019



Timo

Timo is a Laplander who currently lives in Southern Finland, in the city of Hämeenlinna with his wife Päivi and their dog Mosku. His work is very closely connected to nature, as he manages museums and exhibitions for National Parks and Wildlife Service Finland.

Timo spends time in nature every day to relax as well as get inspiration and energy. He believes that nature is pure and simply accepts you as you are. In mid-July Timo will take his guests to Punkaharju to experience Saimaa Lakeland by boat, an area full of islands with smooth beaches and crystal clear waters.

Timo will be accompanied by three guests – Flavia, Carlo & Giada from Pesaro, Italy, who will visit Finland for the very first time. Flavia is a primary school teacher who teaches Italian and English. She heard about Rent a Finn from her brother's (Carlo) girlfriend (Giada) and decided to make an application for the three of them.

Flavia is a nature enthusiast who loves trekking and has always wanted to visit Finland but has never had the chance – until now. She knows that Finns are in close contact with nature and is waiting for a chance to talk about it with Timo. She's also interested in knowing the secrets behind the Finnish school system, which is said to be the best in the world.

Time of visit: 12.–14.7.2019



Hanna

Hanna is an IT marketing professional who currently studies tourism economics. She is passionate about Finnish nature and sharing its wonders with travellers.

Hanna has spent most of her summers sailing in the Archipelago and winters skiing in Lapland, so she is more than familiar with the many wonders of Finnish nature.

This summer Hanna has a special assignment as a Finnish happiness guide. She will host her Chinese guests, Yantao and her son Zishuo, at her grandmother's house in Ansahti.

Yantao works as a teacher in Luoyang, China. She has always wanted to visit Finland, learn about the nature and connect with it. She has heard only good things about Finland: the happiness of the people, long holidays, everyman's rights and saunas. She's now looking forward to seeing all those things with her son this summer.

Time of visit: 2.-4.8.2019



Esko

Esko is the Mayor of Rovaniemi, the hometown of Santa Claus, located next to the Arctic Circle in Lapland. Esko and her spouse Maria will have exciting guests in their summer cottage this summer when Preston, Marie and their two children Savin and Hobson are visiting Finland for the first time.

The family has a long journey ahead of them, as they live in San Diego, California, located in the US west coast. They learned about the Rent a Finn –program when it was mentioned in the national news and got excited right away. Preston is a dentist, Marie an artist and their cheery kids Savin & Hobson are elementary school students.

The family has a strong connection with nature and try to visit city parks daily. But due to their desert-like surroundings they don't have any large forests like Finland does, and are now looking forward to visiting one. Other highlights for the family will be seeing the midnight sun, a sauna and of course, Santa Claus.

Time of visit: 29.–31.7.2019



Linda & Niko

Will be announced later on the campaign website.

Time of visit: 5. – 7.8.2019



Laura & Joni

Laura, Joni and their dog Watti are an active outdoor family who live in Sodankylä, Northern Lapland. They take daily walks in the forest and spend their weekends hiking and bicycling in the summer and skiing in the winter.

This summer they will get new hiking company, as a Chinese-English couple has rented them to be their happiness guides. Chinese Angelina and her English boyfriend Connor learned about the Rent a Finn -program through social media and applied for a chance to reconnect with nature.

The couple has always enjoyed nature but feel that living in a big city like Guangzhou sometimes uses up all their energy and makes their connection to nature feel weaker and weaker.

They know Finland from Santa Claus and have seen the nation's (sometimes peculiar) Eurovision shows, but this summer they are experiencing the effects of Finnish nature first-hand. The couple is looking forward to meeting happy Finnish people, experiencing precious silence of nature and finding inner peace and calm during their journey.

Time of visit: 16.–18.8.2019



Juho!

Juho was born and raised in Japan. Today Juho, his fiancé Marjukka, their two kids and a dog named Dobby all live in Kirkkonummi, near Helsinki. Juho works in both digital media and health tech business.

Juho visits nature regularly and his favourite nature spots are located in Nuuksio and Porkkala. He feels that visiting nature is both a physical and spiritual journey that includes all five senses.

This August Juho will be working as a happiness guide, hosting a Japanese newlywed couple, Shun and Misato, on their trip to Finland. Shun is very interested in learning about the Sauna culture and finding out the true meaning of Sisuu. His wife Misato used to watch the Finnish tv-show, The Moomins, and is now looking forward to relaxing and hearing the

birds sing in the forest. They will be in for a special treat, as Juho has prepared a tent Sauna for them to experience in the middle of nature.

Time of visit: 7.–9.8.2019



Katja!

Katja is a social services student and yoga teacher who lives in a very idyllic wooden neighbourhood of Helsinki, called Käpylä. This Summer Katja acts as a happiness guide and will have a visitor from Cologne, Germany, when a Sports Tourism –student Madeline will visit her in Helsinki.

Madeline grew up in a small town called Wermelskirchen, Germany, where nature was all around her. After moving to Cologne to study, she has lost her daily connection to nature and feels that something is now missing from her life.

This June the pair will try and find the calm of the nature within city limits together. Madeline is looking forward to learn more about the happiest country in the world and is especially enthusiastic about doing seaside yoga with Katja.

Time of visit: 28.–30.6.2019

